

## **Invest to Protect Act Fact Sheet**

The **Invest to Protect Act of 2022** would establish a grant through the Department of Justice's Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program to help small law enforcement agencies fund training, mental health support, recruitment, and retention. The bill gives agencies the flexibility to spend money where it will have the most impact for their unique circumstances and make meaningful investments in their officers and communities.

Most law enforcement agencies in the United States are relatively small. 95% of all local police departments employ no more than 125 officers. Nearly half of all local police departments have fewer than 10 officers and 9 in 10 agencies employ fewer than 50 officers. Small agencies struggle to provide the same resources and training for their officers as larger departments. In addition, staffing shortages continue to put strain on small agencies and impact their ability to keep communities safe.

### **The Invest to Protect Act would:**

- Provide grants to law enforcement agencies with fewer than 125 officers to fund de-escalation training, access to mental health resources, recruitment, and retention.
- Allow DOJ to give preference to agencies applying for funds for de-escalation training.
- Require DOJ to evaluate barriers in the application process and provide technical assistance to agencies applying for grants.
- Require disclosure of the use of grant funds for signing or retention bonuses.
- Allow DOJ to audit any grantees to ensure funds are used appropriately.
- Require DOJ to ensure the grants are not duplicative of existing grant programs.

This bipartisan legislation would support small law enforcement agencies and ensure grant funds are used appropriately while not overly burdening grantees with requirements that small agencies just can't meet. The Invest to Protect Act is widely supported by the law enforcement community including the National Fraternal Order of Police, National Association of Police Organizations, and the National Sheriffs' Association.

## **Break the Cycle of Violence Act**

This country is in the midst of a community violence epidemic that poses a significant threat to public health, safety, and community infrastructure. From 2010-2019, over 175,000 people were murdered in the United States, which in 2020 suffered its largest single-year spike in homicides on record, driven largely by record increases in fatal shootings. This violence is cyclical: up to 45 percent of people treated for gunshot injuries were violently reinjured within 5 years, and victims of violence are at increased risk of retaliating and becoming perpetrators of violence. Community violence has a disparate impact on communities of color, particularly on young people within those communities. On top of its unimaginable human toll, community violence imposes enormous fiscal costs. On average, a single gun homicide generates \$448,000 in medical care and criminal justice expenses that are paid by taxpayers. In all, gun violence costs the U.S. \$280 billion per year.

Evidence-based community violence intervention and prevention programs designed to interrupt cycles of violence and retaliation have proven to be highly effective at reducing rates of community violence, saving lives and taxpayer dollars. Studies have shown that in communities such as St. Louis, Newark,

Omaha, and Salinas, community violence intervention programs have dramatically reduced the rates of homicides and gun violence.

**H.R. 4118, the Break the Cycle of Violence Act**, would create grant programs to establish and/or support effective, evidence-based community violence intervention programs. **Specifically, H.R. 4118 would:**

- Require the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to award \$5 billion in grants over 8 years to community-based nonprofit organizations and eligible local governments for:
  - Community outreach programs staffed by violence intervention and prevention specialists;
  - Hospital-based violence intervention programs (HVIP) that provide intensive counseling, peer support, case management, mediation, and social services to patients recovering from gunshot wounds and other violent injuries.
  - Group violence intervention strategies, which are a form of problem-oriented policing that provides culturally responsive, trauma-informed social services to those at highest risk for involvement in community violence, along with narrowly-focused enforcement actions;
  - Violence interruption and crisis management initiatives.
- Create an Office of Community Violence Intervention at HHS to implement the Act.
- Establish a Community Violence Intervention Advisory Committee to provide advice and assistance to HHS and the Office of Community Violence Intervention, and to help select the grantees.
- Create a National Community Violence Response Center to provide technical assistance and implementation support to grantees, and to conduct research, collect data, and report to Congress.
- Direct the Department of Labor to award \$1.5 billion over 8 years for Improving Approaches for Communities to Thrive (IMPACT) grants to provide job training, apprenticeships, and other workforce experiences for youth in communities disproportionately impacted by violence.

### **VICTIM Act Fact Sheet**

Despite a substantial decline in homicides and violent crime since the peak rates in the early 1990's, the number of homicides in 2021, in 27 major cities studied, increased by 5% from 2020 and by 44% from 2019. This increase in homicides over the last two years occurred throughout the country, with 40% higher per capita murder rates in the 25 states Donald Trump won in the last presidential election and homicide rates in rural America increased by 25% in 2020.

Just as homicide and other violent crime rates have increased, law enforcement agencies struggle to consistently clear cases. In 2020, law enforcement agencies solved 1,200 more homicides than in 2019, an increase of 14%, but due to the dramatic rise in homicides, the clearance rate in 2020 fell to about 50%. This drop follows a consistent decline in clearance rates historically from 83% in 1965 to 61% in 2007. The failure to consistently close homicide and other violent crime cases can harm the reputation of the

agency and impact public trust and confidence in law enforcement. Furthermore, failure to clear a case leaves the victim and their family members without justice or closure.

**The VICTIM Act of 2022** would provide grant funding to state, tribal, or local law enforcement agencies and prosecuting offices to:

- hire, retain, or train detectives to investigate homicides, rapes, sexual assaults, kidnappings, and non-fatal shootings;
- train personnel to address the needs of victims and family members;
- acquire, upgrade, or replace investigative or evidence processing technology or equipment and train evidence processing personnel;
- ensure victim services are funded, staffed, and trained and provide resources to victims and their family members; and
- develop competitive and evidence-based programs to improve clearance rates and victim services.

The bill also requires the National Institute of Justice to conduct bi-annual evaluations of the VICTIM grants and the practices deployed by the grant recipients to identify policies and procedures that have successfully improved clearance rates for homicides and non-fatal shootings.

The VICTIM Act is widely supported by the law enforcement community including the Fraternal Order of Police, the Major City Chiefs Association, the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, and the National Association of Police Organizations.

### **Mental Health Justice Act of 2022**

According to the Treatment Advocacy Center, 1 in 4 fatal police encounters ends the life of an individual with severe mental illness. At this rate, the risk of being killed is 16 times greater for individuals with untreated mental illness than for others approached or stopped by officers.

Those who are arrested are often charged with minor, nonviolent offenses, but as a result, our jail and prison systems are overcrowded with thousands of individuals who would be far better served by other community resources. **The Mental Health Justice Act** would address this by:

- Creating a grant program to pay for hiring, training, salary, benefits and additional expenses for mental health provider first responder units.
  - These mental health providers would act as a mental health emergency response team, deployed when 911 is called because someone is in a mental health crisis or related situation. Mental health providers would be the first on the scene to help the individual and could help them access appropriate community resources.
- Providing expertise through technical assistance from the Disability Rights Section of the Civil Rights Division at the DOJ and from SAMHSA.
  - States and localities would be able to apply for technical assistance from DOJ and SAMHSA if they choose to use their own funding for the program from another portion of the law enforcement budget to create a program that falls under these guidelines.

Creating mental health first responder units will help reduce violence against individuals with mental illnesses and intellectual and developmental disabilities, while also improving the safety of our communities. Mental illness is not a crime, and it's time we stop treating it as one.